

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

King's-Street CHAPEL,

IN THE

Parish of St *James, Westminster,*

On WEDNESDAY, *Feb. 4. 1740-I.*

Being the Day appointed, by HIS MAJESTY'S
Proclamation, for a general Fast, on Occasion
of the present War against SPAIN.

By THOMAS Lord Bishop of Oxford.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. and H. PEMBERTON, at the *Golden-
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M DCC XLI.



2 CHRON. XV. 2.

*The Lord is with you, while ye be with Him:
and if ye seek him, he will be found of
you: but if ye forsake him, He will for-
sake you.*

THESE Words are the Beginning of a serious Admonition, given by the Direction of Heaven to the Nation of the *Jews*, as they returned from obtaining, under the Conduct of *Asa* their King, one of the greatest Victories recorded in Scripture. Their Condition after This, might have appeared to humane Policy a very secure one: But the Divine Wisdom saw the greatest of all Dangers impending over them, that which proceeds from forgetting God and abandoning Virtue. *And the Spirit of the Lord came upon Azariah the son of Oded, and he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: The Lord is with you, while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you.* Now these great Truths, of which Heaven thought it needful to remind them, at the Conclusion of a prosperous War, it must be very much more needful that we should attend to,

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who seem to be only at the Beginning of a doubtful one. And accordingly we are met here, by the Command of Authority, to consider our Ways, and humble ourselves before God for our Sins, as the necessary Means for deriving a Blessing on our Arms, and restoring and perpetuating Peace and Prosperity to our Country.

It is a melancholy Consideration, that Creatures endued with Reason and Humanity should ever come to employ Force against one another, and make the dreadful Addition of the Miseries of War to the many unavoidable Sufferings of Life. But wicked as this is, when Passion and Resentment, Desire of unjust Gain, or Fondness of infamous Glory prompts to it; yet when Injuries of pernicious Consequence are done to a Nation, and persisted in, and no competent Redress can be obtained; it becomes then, both necessary for particular Societies, and beneficial to humane Society in general, that invaded Rights be vigorously asserted by the only Way left. When the Sword is drawn for Justice alone, and ever ready to be sheathed as soon as that is granted; then Heaven may be appealed to, with hopes of a favourable *sentence coming forth from his presence, whose eyes behold the thing that is equal.** But if the Assertors of a righteous Cause be in other respects a sinful People, it is evidently just for God, who hath the Cognizance of both these things, to regard whichever of them infinite Wisdom shall direct; and
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* Psal. xvii. 2.

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make even the injurious Party *the rod of his anger, and the staff in the day of his indignation*, † to correct or destroy, if their Wickedness deserve it, such Nations, as though right in their Disputes with their Enemies, are wrong at the same time in Matters more important. And how little Terror forever our Enemies might give us at first; yet now we must be sensible, that we know not in the least, how soon and how formidably they may increase: but this we know certainly, that *there is no restraint to the Lord, to punish as well as to save by Many, or by Few.* ‖ Times of War therefore add a peculiar Strength to those Admonitions, which Reason and Scripture give us at all times, to consider what our State is with regard to Him, *who doth according to his Will in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth.** Let us then all consider now, whether we have ground of Hope or of Fear from that awful Declaration of the Prophet, which you have heard read.

The Lord is with you, while ye be with him. To be with God, is to preserve in our Minds a reverent Sense of his Being, Presence and Government; to keep close to his Laws, and stand on his Side against the opposite Power of Darkness and Sin. Let us then think, if there be need of Thought to answer; How is the Reverence due to the Supreme Being preserved among us? Have we not Persons, who even ridicule the Notion of a wise and good Maker of all Things? Have we not those, who
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† Isai. x. 5.

‖ 1 Sam. xiv. 6.

* Dan. iv. 35.

if they do admit a Creator, do not admit a Moral Governor of the World ; or at least represent him so very defective in his Administration of it, as finally to let bad Persons be Gainers by their Wickedness, and good Persons Losers by their Virtue : Rejecting with mirthful Scorn, what hath ever been the Hope and Support of wise and good Men, the Belief of that future State, in which the visible Irregularities of the present shall be rectified. Have we not also too many, who, professing perhaps to believe in Natural Religion, yet speak of Christianity, the great Means by which it is both supported and perfected, not only as a Falshood, but an Impossibility: *Blaspheming that worthy Name, by which we are called,** and disdaining to receive from God himself any other Rules, either of Faith or Life, than such as their own Reason, directed by their own Fancy, shall prescribe to them. And let us suppose, if we can, that the Number of such as go these Lengths deliberately, is upon the whole but small: Yet what shall we say of the inconsiderately guilty? Are there not Multitudes of all Degrees, who seem never once to have asked themselves, whether they believe in God or not; or if they do, whether any Regard is due to him or none: who slight Religion boldly, without imagining they have ever examined it: who are persuaded of its Truth perhaps, so far as they have any Persuasion about the Matter; but have no Notion, that they are to regulate their

Conduct

* James ii. 7.

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Conduct by it: who possibly do not quite approve of profane Persons, but are astonished at pious ones; and by their Indulgence to the former, and their very great Proneness to despise the latter, plainly shew, whether they perceive it themselves or not, which Party they are on the Road to join.

We have indeed many still, who frequent Divine Worship: but how many of all Ranks, and of that Rank particularly, which ought to be an Example, and will be one either of Good or Bad; how many that omit this Duty entirely or near it; and though it be an evident Part of the Law of Nature, and an express Precept of Christianity, can yet talk, not only of their own neglecting it, with much Gaiety and Humour, but of other Persons attending upon it, as Matter of Conscience, with much Raillery. And such an Ascendant hath this contemptuous kind of Impiety got, that there are many Persons, who sincerely honour their Maker in their Hearts, but dare not for fear of Derision shew it in their Behaviour. Let it be thought of a little, what the Appearance and Construction of these Things is: and let those who are qualified for it, judge; Is not this the one Nation upon Earth, in which Regard to God is taught in the greatest Purity, and treated with the greatest Contempt?

But a worse Symptom yet is, that whilst Irreligious Persons are active in the Cause of Infidelity; some of them with so self-denying a Bigottry, as
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to teach it their Servants, their very Wives and Children: the Generality of such, as think themselves very competently Religious Persons, scarce appear to have any practical Impressions at all made on them by those Truths, which they acknowledge for the Law of their Lives. They forget, it may be feared, almost entirely, the Exercise of private Piety; and behave in regard to publick Devotion with a Negligence, which they would think highly indecent towards their earthly Superiors: allow themselves in such Levity of Speech on the most serious Subjects, as would scarce be justifiable in some of the most trifling ones; form their Conduct avowedly on Principles, that have no Tincture in them of the Faith they profess; and in effect declare themselves to think of nothing but this World, whilst yet they are really persuaded of another to come. To this it must be added, that very many, who not only believe, but are influenced by their Belief in other Respects, instead of *confessing their Lord and Master before Men*, as he hath most solemnly commanded them*, are silent and indifferent, whilst he is denied, or disregarded ever so much; and seem ashamed of a Cause they ought to glory in: by which means they give bad Persons a Colour for pretending, that few or none are Christians in earnest; and take away from such as are well-disposed, the Encouragement of seeing how a great a Number yet remains. For, God be thanked, they are still no small Number, who
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* Matth. x. 32. Mark viii. 38. Luke ix. 26.

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continue after all bearing Testimony to the Gospel of Christ. But of how many Sins against it, not a few even of these are guilty at the same Time, by deviating from *the Form of sound Words*,* by unwarrantable Divisions, and uncharitable Animosities; it is a great deal better that they should consider, than that others should say: only thus much cannot but be said, that these Things add a peculiar Gloom to the View we are taking.

Religion, it must be owned, hath never been practised any where, as it ought. But have not both the Practice and Profession of it decayed most remarkably, in this Nation, within the Compass of but a few Years? Is not the Prospect before us, that of its declining yet much lower in the Generation that is coming on? And what do we imagine this will end in? If God is, it must be a Matter of ill Desert, either wilfully or thoughtlessly to treat Him, as if He were not. If he hath given a Revelation of his Will to Mankind, it cannot be innocent to neglect it, as if he had given none. And if he is the righteous Governor of the World, He will support his Government by punishing where Guilt appears. If the Guilt be National, it must be expected the Punishment will be so too. And tho' it were not, yet amidst the innumerable Connexions of Things, one Part of a Society cannot suffer, but the whole must partake.

What Judgments in particular God will execute at any time on impious Nations, we cannot say.

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* 2 Tim. i. 13.

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All Nature is in his Power: and they who offend, have every Thing to fear. But one sure Method of Correction, a very merciful Method, as the lower Degrees of it give warning of the higher, but a dreadful one indeed, if that Warning be not taken, is by appointing the natural Consequences of every Sin to be Part of its Reward. The Consequences of Irreligion then what are they, and what must they be, on every Community? True Piety cannot induce Men to injure their Country; and comprehends peculiar Inducements to serve it, of the greatest Force. *For my Brethren and Companions Sakes, I will wish thee Prosperity: Yea, because of the House of the Lord our God, I will seek to do thee Good.** But in Times of publick Danger especially, Belief of Religion gives a Spirit, and Defence of Religion a Motive for exerting it, which Considerations of a lower Nature will never equal. For what is there that can equal the Exhortation, *Be of good Courage, and let us behave ourselves valiantly for our People and for the Cities of our God: and let the Lord do that which is good in his Sight.†* Fear not, neither be dismayed: for the Battle is not yours, but God's.‡ Whereas if some through Infidelity have no Hope in him, and others through Wickedness have only Fear of him, so far as these Ways of thinking can influence, *all Hands will be feeble, and every Heart will melt.||*

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* Psalm cxxii. 8, 9. † 1 Chron. xix. 13. ‡ 2 Chron. xx. 15.
 || Isai. xlii. 7.

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II

But, indeed, the Belief of a just and good Being, who sees and will reward, is at all Times the great Support under the Sufferings of Life, the great Incitement to every Thing worthy, the great Restraint from every Thing base. Humane Weakness evidently wants these Things: and there is nothing else, that can always furnish them. The virtuous Dictates of their own Minds will have little Influence comparatively on most Men, when they are considered no longer as the Voice of God speaking inwardly to them. And the Penalties of humane Laws, without those of the divine Law superadded, will often be evaded, and not seldom desperately braved. For if once Men think there is nothing beyond Death, they will soon come to think there is nothing in it, which ought to withhold them from preferring a short Life spent as they like, to a long one spent otherwise. Feeling themselves free from the Terrors of Religion, they will fly out into Profligateness, merely to shew they are free: And it will be Encouragement enough to them, to pursue every Appetite, Passion, and Fancy, without Reserve; that whatever Inconveniencies may happen to arise from it, one Moment can deliver them from all at once, whenever they please. How then will they act in the numberless Cases, to which the Power of the Magistrate either cannot or is not likely to reach at all, or can have its Effect but imperfectly at best? How, for Instance, will the Properties and even the Lives of Men be secured, when Perjury is no longer

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dreaded? A Consideration of peculiar Weight in this Country: where with amazing Inconsistence we are multiplying Oaths, as if we could depend upon them for every Thing; and slighting the Care of Religion, which alone can give us Cause to depend on them for any Thing. But in general, What or Whom can we possibly hope Mankind will regard, to any constant good Purpose, if they will not regard God: And how can we pretend to regard him, whilst we go on as we do? Nor let it be thought, that the Belief of a future Recompence is necessary to the lower Part of the World alone: though if it were, they will never preserve it long, when they see their Superiors have it not. But the higher Men's Station and the greater their Power is, the more is the Importance, both to others and themselves, that they be strongly influenced to do Good and not Evil, by this only Motive that can never be outweighed.

It is very true, neither Irreligious Persons are always so bad, nor Religious ones always so good, as their Notions lead them to be: But still every Way of thinking produces, more or less, its natural Effects. The deeper Root Religion takes, the more Benefit will spring from it: and the wider Irreligion spreads, the more Mischief it will bring forth. At present it must endeavour to appear as harmless as it can, to recommend itself: and some Degree of the good old Impressions will remain, and have Influence for a time, even on those who have done their best to wear them out. But when
Profane-

Profaneness shall once have attained its Maturity, then it will be felt, if Men are resolved not to see it before, Which were in the right: the weak and credulous Creatures, who contended for honouring God; or the Persons of superior Knowledge and Freedom of Thought, who scorned and forsook him.

But we must remember, our Maker is forsaken, when Virtue, the Law He hath given to Mankind, is transgressed; as well as when his Worship is deserted, or his Being denied. Let it then be a second Article of Enquiry, What our Condition is in this respect.

The Consequence appears a very plain one, that when Religion decays, Morals must. However let us look into Fact. In speaking of Virtues and Vices relating to the Publick, no Matters of Controversy ought so much as to be hinted at in this Place: a Place to be kept sacredly separate from the Contests of Parties; and only employed, when Occasion requires, to call on every Party alike, as in the Name of God, to consider their Doings. Where Divisions and mutual Accusations run so dreadfully high, there must be great Faults on one side or other; 'tis well, if not on all. And all should consider very seriously, what they are aiming at, and by what Means; what they are risking, and to what good End. But That above the rest should be considered, which it may be feared is often thought of least, what must become, whilst each Side is supporting itself by the Methods too common

common, what must become of the Virtue and Integrity of this People, the most important Part of all they have to be concerned for. Every other sort of Loss Nations have often recover'd, and risen again from the lowest Ebb: but Loss of Probity and Principle, this affects the Vitals of Society: and whatever accidental Advantages may seem to arise from it in any Case for a time; if the Distemper grows, and 'tis the hardest in the World to stop, its Conclusion must be fatal. And let it not be objected, that Countries of very little Virtue and publick Spirit have flourished notwithstanding. For how have they flourished? In a State of Freedom? No. Outward Prosperity hath been joined with domestick Oppression: or if Intervals of Ease have been felt; they have always been precarious, and generally short.

Impartial Reflexions on these Matters will shew us very clearly the Guilt and the Danger of our Sins with respect to the Publick. But we shall see both in a yet stronger Light, if we reflect farther, How very little Zeal we express, in the midst of all our Vehemence about disputed Points, for the Promotion of Things indisputably right. Proposals for Reformation are treated in the gross, as mere Chimeras: mighty little Harm apprehended from the most flagrant Immoralities, but dreadful ill Consequences to Liberty from restraining them: Laws treated with Contempt by those who should obey them, and this connived at by those who should execute them; still every one complaining
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immoderately of others, for what no one will Himself contribute to amend.

But indeed publick Virtue, though it were genuine, will never be consistent and universal, while private Vices are indulged. And to what a deplorable Degree these abound amongst us,, needs not be said, how much soever it needs to be thought of. The Intemperance, the promiscuous Lewdness, the want of Industry and Frugality, the Disregard to Authority and Order, the Profligateness of all kinds, that hath overspread in a most uncommon manner the lower Part of the People, every body sees. And would but some of higher Condition reflect, how much they have sunk themselves to a Level with their Inferiors, in some of the worst of their Qualities; and indeed contributed to make many of them so bad as they are, and themselves despised by them at the same time; it might be hoped the Consideration would be useful. But not to say more of these. The Faults of too many, who are accounted, and are in comparison, decent and regular Persons; their improvident Expensiveness, pernicious many ways; their Living to Amusements and Pleasures only, and overlooking the most serious Obligations of Life; forgetting the Inspection of their own Conduct, their Families and Affairs; neglecting their very Children, at least in the important Point of their Religion and Morals: These are sad Instances of personal Guilt, and make a great Addition to the national Danger.

But

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But when to the above-mentioned Epidemical Sins, every one hath added, after examining himself faithfully, the separate Transgressions of his own Life, and the inward *Plague*, which he hath permitted to infect *his own Heart*;* unknown perhaps to Men, but *naked and open to Him with whom we have to do*:† then we shall have no doubt left, whether the total Amount be not abundantly sufficient, to justify Heaven in whatever Judgments it may inflict on Us and our Country. And if, for Instance, by our Contempt of true Religion we should open a Way for Popish Superstition to overspread us, after a short preparatory Reign of atheistical Diffoluteness; if our Abuses on all hands of the Blessings of a Free Government should introduce upon us a Slavery of our own creating; if the sinful Excesses we have suffer'd Wealth and Plenty to lead us into, should bring on us, as they naturally do, Poverty and Distress; and our Domestick Enmities deliver us up to our common Adversary; *who shall have pity upon thee, O Jerusalem, or who shall bemoan thee; or who shall go aside to ask of thy Peace?*‡

The common Answer to all Representations of this Sort, is, That the World hath always been bad; and therefore we have no peculiar Reason to fear. But if it hath been always a Place of Wickedness, it hath always been a Place of Misery too, by Means of that Wickedness. Continual Efforts
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* 1 Kings viii. 38. † Heb. iv. 13. ‡ Jer. xv. 5.

have been ever necessary to keep both from increasing. And if we, whom God hath treated with such distinguishing Mercy, will not use these Efforts, but abandon ourselves to Sin; as He doth think fit to make some Examples of his Justice from time to time, what fitter Example he can make, is hard to say.

Persons however will flatter themselves, that these, at the worst, are Dangers of very distant Times. And every single Sinner, in the World flatters himself in just the same Manner. Yet the Consequences of their Sins do overtake Men, and may overtake Nations too, with surprizing Suddenness. And the Sentence recorded in Scripture is perfectly just: *They of the House of Israel say, The Vision that he seeth is for many Days to come; and he prophesieth of Times that are far off. Therefore shall none of my Words be prolonged any more: but the Word which I have spoken shall be done, saith the Lord God.* And they shall know, that I am the Lord; and have not said in vain, that I would do this Evil unto them.†*

Other Persons there are, who acknowledge the Prospect to be bad, and Evil perhaps impending: But the only wise Part in their Opinion is, to let Matters go as they will, and enjoy themselves as long as they can: Why should they be uneasy before the time comes? Now if it were certain, that nothing could do good, this might be reasonable in

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* Ezek. xii. 27, 28.

† Ezek. vi. 10.

a worldly View of things: but where every one may contribute, both by amending himself and awakening others, to prevent Ruin; there to be indolent, is as contrary to Humanity, as it is to Religion. And therefore the Word of God hath taken severe notice of it, as a great Crime. *Ye have seen the Breaches of the City of David, that they are many:—And in that Day did the Lord God of Hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to girding with Sack-cloth: and behold Joy and Gladness, eating Flesh and drinking Wine: Let us eat and drink, for to morrow we die. And it was revealed in mine Ears by the Lord of Hosts: Surely this Iniquity shall not be purged from you, till ye die, saith the Lord God of Hosts.**

But even they who are concerned for the Publick, may yet express that Concern in a very faulty Way. Many seem to think they have fully done their Duty, as soon as they have been angry at those, whom they apprehend to have any way occasioned what is amiss: angry perhaps at the wrong Persons, perhaps in a wrong Manner; such as only tends to increase Guilt, and hasten Mischief.

The first Complaint, generally speaking, is of those in Authority. And undoubtedly the People have a Right to complain, whenever the common Concern is administered ill. But then it should be considered, that we may through Ignorance or Pre-

* Isa. xxii. 9, 12, 13, 14.

Prejudice expect from Authority, either what it cannot do, or what is not fit to be done: we may expect more than is reasonable to expect from Men like ourselves, though it be fit: and even supposing them very much to blame, we may conduct ourselves upon it so as to be equally or yet more to blame. Want of Reverence to Laws and Superiors is one of our great Evils: and all Opposition to whatever is thought wrong, should be accompanied with the strictest Care not to increase this Evil. But our Duty requires us peculiarly to beware of raising Domestick Uneasinesses too high, when a foreign Enemy may take Advantage of them: and at all Times it requires us, to preserve most religiously the Loyalty and Honour due to the supreme Power: especially now, when our present Establishment is our only humane Hope of having all that is valuable to us secured to ourselves, and transmitted to our Posterity.

Next to the Rulers of a Nation, its Instructors are usually the great Object of Censure: and we acknowledge there is Cause. We have not been so serious and religious, so zealous and diligent, so disinterested and humble, so mild and charitable, as we ought. The Publick must have suffer'd by this: we have suffer'd by it ourselves: and unless we repent, we have ground to expect a yet fuller Execution, than we have experienced already, of what Heaven inflicted on our Predecessors in the Jewish Nation: *Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the People, according as*

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*ye have not kept my Ways.** Yet we cannot but hope, that a very considerable Part of the Accusations brought against us, would appear upon Enquiry to be without foundation. But however that be, we must remind you, that Our Faults will be no Excuse for Your Transgressions: and we earnestly beg, that they who complain we do not the Good we ought, would at least not hinder, but give us Opportunity, and assist us rather, to do both Others and Themselves the Good we would.

But even they, who proceed from Complaints to Endeavours of amending things, will fail unhappily of their End, if they trust to worldly Methods alone, and leave Religion and Virtue, the great Support and Cement of humane Society, out of their Schemes. This will be merely palliating for a little while, and doing what the Scripture, in perfect Conformity with plain Reason, hath long ago condemned, as doing nothing. *They have healed the Hurt of the Daughter of my People slightly; saying, Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace.† There is no Peace, saith my God, to the Wicked.‖* But the Vanity of such Attempts is exposed yet more strongly in the Prophet Ezekiel: *Because they have seduced my People, saying, Peace, and there was no Peace; and one built up a Wall, and others daubed it with untemper'd Morter: Therefore thus saith the Lord God, I will rend it with a stormy Wind, and bring it down to the Ground, so that the*
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* Mal. ii. 9. † Jer. vi. 14. ‖ Isa. lvii. 21.

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*Foundations thereof shall be discover'd: and it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the midst thereof, and ye shall know that I am the Lord.** Indeed every Page of the prophetical Writings recommends itself greatly to thinking Persons, by the most forcible and convincing Expressions of the utter Inefficacy of every Expedient for publick Good, that is not accompanied with true Virtue and true Piety.

These therefore it is our most important Interest to restore and promote: to represent with Earnestness, and yet with Mildness, to such as are deficient in either, how wrong in itself, and how hurtful to the World, their Conduct is; and to be zealous in doing our own Duty, whether They will attend to theirs or not: Persons of Rank and Influence, by setting an Example worthy of Imitation, and shewing different Regards to the Good and the Bad; Persons intrusted with publick Power, by behaving in their several Stations uprightly; Parents and Masters, by the prudent Exercise of their private Authority; and every one, at least by reforming Himself. This, if it do nothing farther, will be securing his own Happiness: and the more single Reforms there are, the nearer will be our Approach to an Universal one. We are called indeed perpetually to Repentance: but the present National Call, if it be not hearken'd to, will much aggravate the Guilt, not only of the profane Despisers

* Ezek. xiii. 10—14.

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spisers of it, but of those also, whose Compliance with it is merely external; who dare to approach the Searcher of Hearts, and mock him by saying to him, without Sincerity, such Things as we have joined in saying this Day.

On the Times appointed for Confession of Sins, it hath always been a Rule, as the Word of God plainly shews, for Persons to abstain in a considerable Degree from their usual Food: not as thinking it a Duty of any Value in itself, for that were a superstitious Imagination; and nothing can be more express against every Superstition, than Scripture is: but partly to make an Acknowledgment of more than ordinary Solemnity, by their Actions as well as Words, of their Unworthiness to partake of the common Blessings of Heaven; and chiefly, to spend those Hours in Humility of Spirit, and cool Reflexion for their future Good, which they have spent too frequently in dangerous Levities, or sinful Indulgences. 'Tis not then the Abstinence, it is not the outward Humiliation, nor even the real Seriousness of a Day, which God requires of us; but that these Things be made subservient to our lasting Benefit: that preserving on our Minds the Impression of what we have said and heard here, we go Home and retire into ourselves; think over our several Duties, publick and private, with respect to our Maker, our Fellow-creatures, and the Regulation of our own Hearts; and after renewing our Applications for Pardon and Grace, set
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right, without Delay, whatever hath been wrong: that we form Resolutions to think often of our own Conduct, to follow steddily the most effectual Methods for preserving it such as we ought, and not to suffer the Opinions and Customs of an inconsiderate World, to wear out of our Minds the Regard we owe to the Author and End of our Beings.

But besides these Obligations, there is yet another, which particularly deserves our Attention at this Time; that when we ask Mercy of God, we shew it to Man. And accordingly the Scripture joins closely together Fasting and giving Alms; which therefore we should join too, each according to his Ability: but always remembring, that no one Part of our Duty whatever will be accepted as an Equivalent for transgressing any other; but we must *break off our Sins by Righteousness*, as well as *our Iniquities by shewing Mercy to the Poor*,* if ever we expect that our Charity should avail towards procuring our Pardon.

And now would we but employ the present Solemnity, in determining conscientiously to practise these Things: besides the good Fruits, it could not fail to produce in each of us singly; we might hope, on very just Grounds, to experience nationally the same happy Effects of it, which we read the *Jews* did, from making the same Determination, upon hearing the Admonition of the
Text,

* Dan. iv. 27.

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*Text. They gathered themselves together, and they entred into a Covenant to seek the Lord God of their Fathers. And they sware unto him with a loud Voice: And all Judah rejoiced at the Oath. For they had sworn with all their Heart, and sought him with their whole Desire, and he was found of them: And the Lord gave them Rest round about.**

* 2 Chron. xv. 10, 12, 14, 15.

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